

**2021 ANNUAL REPORT
PLANNING AND ZONING BUREAU
1-5-22**

The following describes the activities of the Planning and Zoning Bureau in 2021.

Planning Commission

The Planning Commission held eleven (11) meetings to review:

- three (3) major land development plans
- six (6) combined major land development and subdivisions plans
- two (2) sketch plans
- seven (7) site plan reviews
- two (2) map amendment to the Zoning Ordinance (1 denied)
- two (2) text amendments to the Zoning Ordinance
- one (1) curb and sidewalk deferral request
- four (4) blighted properties reviews
- one (2) street vacation review
- Non-Utility Capital Improvement Program review
- Broad Street Active Transportation Plan review
- Climate Action Plan presentation
- SALDO ordinance review

Residential Apartment Unit construction increased almost 600% in 2021 (98 units in 2020 versus 676 units in 2021). Comparing 2019 (pre-Covid) to 2021, the increase was almost 300%. The most significant of the Land Development reviews include:

1. **South New Street Apartments & Retail Plan.** The project proposes the consolidation of 3 lots and the construction of a multi-story retail and apartment building containing 61 dwelling units on a .4421 acre lot. The upper floors will extend out over Graham Street with columns extending into the Greenway for support.
2. **2011 City Line Road.** The project proposes the construction of a four (4) story hotel with 117 guest rooms on a 2.9984 acre lot.
3. **250 E. Broad Street.** The project proposes the construction of a four-story building with 42 residential apartments and 6,500 square foot retail space on the first floor, located on a 1.1 acre lot.
4. **2285 & 2425 Schoenersville Road.** Westgate Mall Land Development Plan (Phase 3). The project proposes to subdivide the overall parcel to provide an Outparcel on the corner of Schoenersville Road and Westgate Drive and develop the Outparcel with a new fast-food use pad site. Additionally, Phase 3 will remove the existing pad structure at the corner of Catasauqua Road and Schoenersville Road and redevelop a new pad site with a financial institution use. The project will realign the driveway entrances along Catasauqua Road and Schoenersville Road and reconfigure the main parking field for improved access and circulation.

5. **26-44 W. Broad Street (Boyd Redevelopment).** The project proposes the construction of a six-story (plus 1 below-grade level) mixed use building containing 204 residential apartments and retail space, resident common areas and amenities (including a fitness center) on the first floor. Also, lower level off street parking for approximately 54 vehicles is proposed. The combined property is .87 acres.
6. **14-36 W. 3rd Street Mixed Use.** The project proposes to construct an 8 story multi-use building with 1st floor being 8,300 sf of restaurant and lobby area. Floors 2-8 will consist of 87 apartment units on a 14,758 sq. ft. lot.
7. **3rd & Taylor Mixed Use - 307- 311 E. 3rd Street.** The project proposes to demolish an existing parking lot and construct a 5 story mixed-use building with first floor retail and 4 upper floors containing 44 dwelling units.
8. **117 E. 4th Street Mixed Use.** The project proposes the construction of an 8 story apartment building containing 70 dwelling units and 1st floor retail space on a 0.51 acre lot. Lower level parking is also provided.
9. **413-415 E. 3rd Street (3rd and Polk Mixed Use).** The applicant proposes to develop a 5 story mixed use building on Lot 1 containing a 9,060 commercial first floor and 35 apartments on the upper floors. Lot 2 is the proposed parking garage. A 3rd floor connecting bridge is proposed from the mixed use building to the parking garage.
10. **30 W. 4th Street (4th and Vine Mixed Use).** The applicant proposes the construction of a seven-story building containing 22,750 sq. ft. with 25 residential apartments and retail space on the first floor, located on a 0.12 acre lot.

Zoning Hearing Board

The Zoning Hearing Board had another extremely busy year. The Board held 18 meetings in 2021 and heard 66 appeals. Significant Zoning Hearing Board appeals include:

1. **601-699 East Broad Street**
Appeal of Gretchen Rice on behalf of 601 Broad Development Group LLC for an Appeal of the Determination of the Zoning Officer, an Interpretation that roof access creates a fourth story, or in the alternative a Variance to include the Lot Area of adjacent vacant parcels as part of the Total Lot Area Per Dwelling Unit, 116 dwellings permitted, 116 dwellings proposed, or in the alternative, a Variance to reduce the Lot Area Per Dwelling Unit, 85 dwellings permitted, 116 dwellings proposed. The project is located in the prior Laros Silk Mill building and converts the upper two floors to residential units. The project was approved for 116 units but maintained the Zoning Officer's interpretation that the building is only 3 full stories.
2. **250 East Broad Street**
Appeal of Robert DeBeer on behalf of 250 E Broad, LLC/Peron Development to construct a four-story mixed-use structure containing Commercial Retail and Residential Multi-Family Dwellings. The lot is located in the CL-Limited Commercial Zoning District. The project will include 42 dwelling units and the Bethlehem Food CO-OP will be located on the first floor.
3. **1002 Evans Street and 946 Evans Street**

Appeal of Pat Ruggiero on behalf of Ruggonz, LLC, to convert the former two-story, 10,642 SF Warehouse into 13 Multi-Family Dwellings, which requires a Dimensional Variance for lot area per dwelling units. The parcel is located in the RT-Residential Zoning District. The appeal was granted with conditions, including parking covenants, redesign of current parking, creation of a parklet and installation of trees and design requirements.

4. **323 Pierce Street**

Appeal of Robert DeBeer on behalf of Peron Pierce, LLC, and Ivy Kromer on behalf of Country Club Brewing, LLC, to demolish and reconstruct a non-conforming structure, which requires a Use Variance to permit a Micro-Brewery with Tasting Room and Dimensional Variances. The lot is located in the RT-Residential zoning district. The appeal was granted with the condition that the hours will be as allowed by the PA Liquor Control Board for a manufacturing use.

5. **2958 Linden Street**

Appeal of Duane Wagner on behalf of Setnom Enterprises, LLC, to demolish an existing restaurant and construct an ~2,400 SF Commercial Restaurant, which requires Dimensional Variances, and to construct a four-story residential structure containing 61 Multi Family Dwellings, which also requires dimensional variances. The lot is located in the CS-Commercial Shopping zoning district. The project was approved as submitted.

6. **2040 Avenue C**

Appeal of Susan Mauser, on behalf of Lehigh Valley Academy Regional Charter School, to convert the former office (FLSmith) into a school, which requires a Use Variance. The parcel is located in the Planned Industrial zoning district. The appeal was granted with conditions, including receipt of all required permits and development of the project in accordance with the plans, testimony and evidence presented.

7. **424 Center Street**

Appeal of Amanda DiIorio on behalf of 424 Center, LLC, to convert the former Unitarian Universalist Church into an Artists Management Company, which requires a Use Variance to permit a Crafts or Artisan's Studio; Dimensional Variances to construct a 518 SF Addition, which exceeds the maximum building coverage and a Special Exception to reduce the off-street parking. This project is located in the RT-Residential zoning district. This appeal was denied.

8. **258 East Market Street and 2-4 West Church Street**

Appeal of Mary Ellen Williams, on behalf of Doctor & Sir, LLC from an Enforcement Notice for using the above referenced properties, all or in part, to provide housing for transient occupants contrary to the provisions of 1304.01(b) of the Zoning Ordinance (Sections 1304.01(b), 1325.05, and all associated Variances, Special Exceptions, and Interpretations). Both parcels are located in the RT-Residential zoning district. No decision has been rendered on these cases yet. The appeals continue to be heard with the next hearing date scheduled for January 2022.

9. 1210-1214 Eaton Avenue

Appeal of Dominic Villani, on behalf of on behalf of 1015 Partners, LLC, to consolidate the lots and construct a three story structure containing 18 multi-family dwellings, which requires a Dimensional Variance to reduce the lot area per dwelling. The lot is located in the RG-Residential zoning district. The project was approved with conditions that the lots must be consolidated, land development must be approved and the quality of all development must be as provided in the testimony.

10. 447 and 468 North Pine Top Circle

Appeal of Benjamin Hoffman on behalf of R&S Hoffman Builders, LLC, for after-the-fact Variances to decrease the minimum lot area within slopes over 35% for both lots. Both lots are located in the RR-Rural Residential zoning district. Both appeals were approved with the condition that both properties shall submit a landscape plan showing that appropriate buffering will be installed between neighbors.

11. 828 Evans Street

Appeal of Yajaira Morales on behalf of M and N Tire and Auto Services, LLC, for a Use Variance to permit a parking lot as the principal use of a lot for an adjacent, legally non-conforming, Auto Repair Garage. The lot is located in the RT-Residential zoning district. The City administration testified at this appeal due to safety concerns. The parking lot is proposed across Hayes Street from the auto repair garage. Hayes Street is known as a busy corridor that is challenging for pedestrians to cross. The project was approved as a Special Exception with the conditions that there shall be no overnight storage of customer vehicles, no storage of unregistered vehicles, no vehicular ingress or egress at Evans Street, the City Engineer shall approval vehicular ingress/egress at Mechanic Street and the lot shall be fully fenced in with a pedestrian gate to be located at the direction of the City Engineer.

12. 3410-3412 Linden Street

Appeal of Alain Aoun on behalf of West Broad Investments, LLC, to demolish the existing structure and construct 15 multi-family dwellings, which requires a Dimensional Variance to reduce the lot area per dwelling unit. The parcel is located in the RG-Medium Density Residential zoning district. This appeal was denied.

13. 124 Goodman Drive

Appeal of Scott Hesser on behalf of Saucon Valley Solar Partners, LLC, for an Appeal of the determination of the Zoning Officer, or in the alternative, a Variance to exceed the maximum fence height, 6'permitted, 8' proposed. This appeal relates to a solar farm located on Lehigh University property. The appeal was granted, but it really only related to the fencing of the project. The solar farm will be reviewed by the Planning Commission at some point in 2022.

14. 830 13th Avenue

Appeal of Lois Arciszweski on behalf of Adams Outdoor Advertising, LLC, to modify an off-premise, billboard sign, which requires Dimensional Variances to

exceed the maximum allowable area, 100 SF permitted, 625 SF proposed, and to exceed the maximum height, 25' permitted, 34' proposed. The sign fronts on Route 378 in the Industrial zoning district. This appeal was granted with the condition that all required approvals from PennDOT are also provided.

15. 2854 Linden Street

Appeal of Dino and Joanna Cantelmi to construct a three story structure containing 36 multi-family dwellings, which requires Dimensional Variances to reduce the lot area per dwelling, to exceed the maximum building length and to reduce the minimum separation distance between dwellings and parking, and a Variance to locate an accessory structure (garbage dumpster) within the front yard. The lot is located in the RG-Residential zoning district. This appeal was denied.

Historic Review Boards

There were 25 appeals before the Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB) and 44 appeals before the Historic Conservation Commission – South Bethlehem and Mount Airy (HCC) in 2021.

In spring of 2021 the Bureau concluded an analysis of the South Side Planning study. Following substantial input from various parties, the Study makes several recommendations to ease the review process in South Bethlehem. For instance, allowing some administrative reviews for minor and routine submissions, creating a fee structure and requiring additional information for larger projects and demolition. Ordinance amendments were drafted in 2021 for council review and approval in 2022. Although there was much discussion about revising height provisions and recommendations in both the zoning and historic district ordinances, there was little consensus on any recommendations in this regard.

In addition, because Bethlehem is a Certified Local Government, we are required to provide opportunities for training for both HARB and HCC. This year an 8-hour training session (CAMP) was coordinated with the historic review boards from both Allentown and Bethlehem. The training was lead virtually by training experts from throughout the country.

Special Projects

South Bethlehem Greenway – Design was completed and the project was awarded for construction of a connection between the Greenway and the existing ballfields at the north end of Saucon Park. Construction will begin in early 2022. This project is supported by a substantial grant from DCNR. This is the last phase of construction proposed on the Greenway for the portion of the trail that the City already owns.

South Side Vision 2020 – The Planning Bureau continues to work with the Community Action Development Corporation (CADCB) to provide staff support for the South Side Vision 2020 plan and projects. The Bureau assists in project implementation through the Development subcommittee. The committee continued to work with a lighting consultant, which developed a lighting plan for South Bethlehem, beginning with a demonstration street. The draft plan was presented to the full SS Vision Board. The plan will be reviewed with City Staff prior to finalization.

The Planning Bureau also participates in discussions with the Southside Vision 2020 Housing subcommittee. The housing committee participated in the development of zoning ordinance

amendments related to student housing. The Student Housing Zoning Amendment and Overlay Map was recommended for approval by the Planning Commission in late 2020 and was adopted by City Council in early 2021.

Wayfinding/Signage Project –The Phase 2 of the wayfinding signs was bid and a contractor was selected. Phase 2 includes all of the remaining pedestrian-style wayfinding signs. These signs will be installed in early 2022. Review by PennDOT is ongoing for the installation of the vehicle-style wayfinding signs.

Monocacy Way –The majority of construction for the Monocacy Way project was completed with only some minor construction details remaining for spring of 2022. A Northampton County Open Space grant and a PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) grant are combined to allow the Monocacy Way trail upgrade. The improvements extend from Schoenersville Road and continue to the Monocacy Park Complex and Illick’s Mill Road. The City continues to pursue funding sources for the upgrade of the trail south of Schoenersville Road to connect to the D & L trail.

Zoning Amendments – The Bureau has been working on several amendments and revisions to the Zoning Ordinance through 2021. The Student Home Overlay Amendment and text revisions to the allowed uses for first floor retail, restaurant, and personal service uses in the CB and CL Zoning Districts were approved by City Council in early 2021. Zoning amendments related to the Martin Tower site were also approved in 2021. Provisions related to multi-family dwellings were also approved. The zoning map was revised in a minor way on West Broad Street in response to a private landowner request. The Bureau continues to look at other areas of the Zoning Ordinance for appropriate modifications and amendments.

Boards and Committees - Planning and Zoning Bureau staff continue to support and participate in a variety of regional and local boards and commissions, including Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, Lehigh Valley Transportation Study, South Side Vision 2020, South Side Arts District and others.

Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance - The Bureau has been updating the SALDO with the assistance of URDC, a local consulting firm. All relevant bureaus have been meeting with the Planning Bureau staff to revise relevant draft sections. The draft SALDO was initially presented to the Planning Commission in December 2019. A draft final document and revised summary report was prepared by Planning Bureau Staff and will be presented to the Planning Commission for a recommendation to forward to City Council in early 2022.

Northside 2027 –The committee structure for administration of the Northside 2027 Neighborhood Plan was strengthened in coordination with Community Action Committee of Bethlehem. Requests for Proposals have been developed and distributed in the areas of Branding and development of Friendship Park. Proposals will be accepted and reviewed in early 2022. A Multimodal Grant submission was made to address traffic calming and pedestrian safety improvements along the East Broad Street corridor in the NS2027 study area.

Broad Street Active Transportation Plan – The Broad Street Activation Transportation Plan was completed with WalkWorks grant funds. The Plan is an analysis of the entire Broad Street Corridor to address bicycle, pedestrian safety and transit improvements. The Plan includes a range of recommendations including bike lanes, enhanced pedestrian crossings, bump outs, painted markings, street trees and signage in various sections. As follow-up to the Plan’s completion, a Multimodal Grant was submitted as described in the Northside 2027 section above. Grant awards will be announced in 2022.

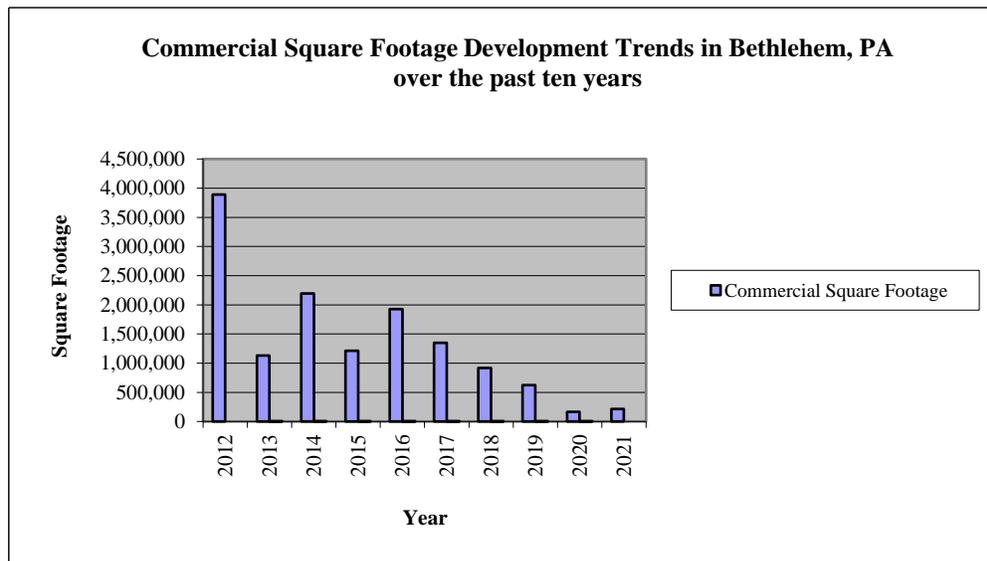
Pedestrian Bridge Feasibility Study—The Pedestrian Bridge Feasibility Study was initiated in 2021 to analyze the feasibility of the development of a pedestrian/bike bridge over the Lehigh River. The project is possible through funding by Northampton County and DCNR. Public meetings have been conducted to locate three primary bridge locations. At this point more additional analysis is being conducted of the three primary locations. The feasibility study will conclude in 2022 with a final recommended bridge location, cost estimates, permit requirements, timelines and other information. A website, www.bridgebethlehem.com for more information.

Development Trends

The following charts and graphs depict development trends in Bethlehem for the past 10 years.

The commercial square footage totals reflect mostly warehouse and medical office development, but these numbers also include some of the recent expansion of Lehigh University and Wind Creek Casino.

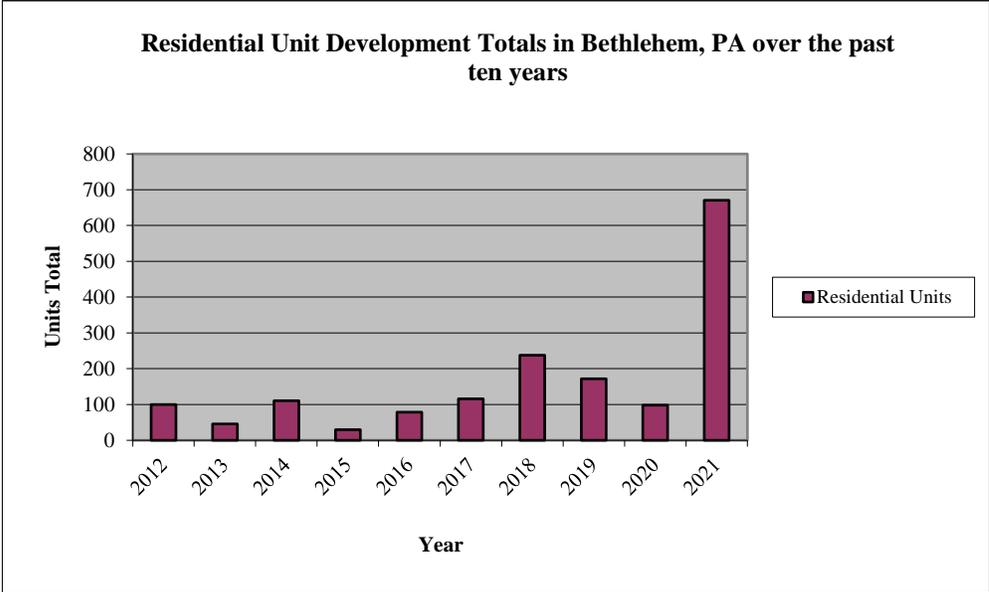
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Commercial Square Footage	3,892,217	1,132,254	2,195,142	1,210,854	1,924,765	1,351,335	916,286	622,763	165,160	213,238



***2012 includes the Majestic Bethlehem Center**

The following shows the number of residential dwelling units approved by year.

2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
100	46	111	30	79	116	238	172	98	671



The final chart shows the total number of plans submitted by year.

Total number of subdivision and land development projects

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Land Development	13	10	11	8	8	9	12	11	8	19
Subdivision	2	1	0	1	5	6	4	6	3	3
Minor Land Development	4	2	0	7	2	3	2	2	3	0
Minor Subdivision	8	7	2	8	7	5	7	5	6	7

